

An apparatus and method affords, to authorized persons, access to one or more lockable areas of one or more gaming machines. Each area includes a door or switch and an associated electrically operable lock mechanism which controls access to the area. Each machine has a local processor communicating with a central host computer and with lock processors for each of its lockable areas. Personnel identification and access authorization data is stored at the host computer. Data may also be stored on personal data cards, respectively assigned to individual persons. A person seeking access inputs identification data at the machine, and the host computer responds with signals to unlock lock mechanisms for areas which the identified person is authorized to access. Each machine monitors the states of all of its locks and doors. A manual override key, disabled when power is on, operates the lock mechanisms when power is off.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 11, 27 and 32, respectively, to read as follows:

1. (Amended) Apparatus for selectively controlling access to one or more of plural physical areas of a gaming machine, the apparatus comprising:

plural electrically operable lock mechanisms respectively associated with the areas and each physically movable between unlocked and locked conditions with respect to its associated area;

control circuitry including a processor operating under control of a stored program and coupled to each of the lock mechanisms for controlling operation thereof;

a data storage and retrieval system adapted to communicate with the processor and including a storage medium for storing data including personnel identification data and access authorization data indicative of the areas, if any, of the machine for which a person seeking access to the machine is authorized; and